16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
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and the enemy were gone, no one could tell whither, into the night.

Such a scene of desolation as that village was next day! It was all destroyed—every house. All the food was gone, all furniture, all clothes, everything, and here and there was a corpse in among the blackened cinders. The whole countryside was terror-stricken at this failure to defend those who had depended on us.

I do not think this was a particularly gallant act, but it was a very able one. It was certainly war. It taught us a very severe lesson—more severe than a personal reverse would have been. It struck terror in the countryside. The memory of it hampered us for very long; even now they often talk of it. It was a brutal act—that of a brigand, not a soldier.

But there was no want of courage. If these men, inferior in number, in arms, in everything, could do this under the lead of a robber chief, what would they not have done if well led, if well trained, if well armed?

Of desperate encounters between our troops and the insurgents I could tell many a story. I have myself seen such fights. They nearly always ended in our favour—how could it be otherwise?

There was Ta Te, who occupied a pagoda enclosure with some eighty men, and was attacked by our mounted infantry. There was a long fight in that hot afternoon, and very soon the insurgents' ammunition began to fail, and the pagoda was stormed. Many men were killed, and Ta Te, when his men were nearly all dead, and his ammunition quite expended, climbed up the pagoda wall, and twisted off

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721 pieces of the cement and threw them at the troops. 157 He would not surrender—not he—and he was killed. 701 There were many like him. The whole war was little affairs of this kind—a hundred, three hundred, of our men, and much the same, or a little more, of theirs. They only once or twice raised a force of two thousand men. Nothing can speak more forcibly of their want of organization than this. The whole country was pervaded by bands of fifty or a hundred men, very rarely amounting to more than two hundred, and no two bands ever acted in concert.

It is probable that most of the best men of the country were against us. It is certain, I think, that of those who openly joined us and accompanied us in our expedition, very, very few were other than men who had some private grudge to avenge, or some purpose to gain, by opposing their own people. Of such as these you cannot expect very much. And yet there were exceptions—men who showed up all the more brilliantly because they were exceptions—men whom I shall always honour. There were two I remember best of all. They are both dead now.

722 One was the eldest son of the hereditary governor 642 of a part of the country called Kawlin. It is in 631 the north-west of Upper Burma, and bordered on a semi-independent state called Wuntho. In the troubles that occurred after the deposition of King Thibaw, the Prince of Wuntho thought that he would be able to make for himself an independent kingdom, and he began by annexing Kawlin. So the governor had to flee, and with him his sons, and

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son's name, and 'Traitor, traitor!' till the hills were full of sound.

The Burman turned away.

'You see,' he said, 'how they hate me. What would be the good of charms?'

The voice was quiet, and the camp sank into stillness, and ere long the moon set, and it was quite dark.

He was a brave man, and, indeed, there are many brave men amongst the Burmese. They kill leopards with sticks and stones very often, and even tigers. They take their frail little canoes across the Irrawaddy in flood in a most daring way. They in no way want for physical courage, but they have never made a cult of bravery; it has never been a necessity to them; it has never occurred to them that it is the prime virtue of a man. You will hear them confess in the calmest way, 'I was afraid.' We would not do that; we should be much more afraid to say it. And the teaching of Buddhism is all in favour of this. Nowhere is courage—I mean aggressive courage—praised. No soldier could be a fervent Buddhist; no nation of Buddhists could be good soldiers; for not only does Buddhism not inculcate bravery, but it does not inculcate obedience. Each man is the ruler of his life, but the very essence of good fighting is discipline, and discipline, subjection, is unknown to Buddhism. Therefore the inherent courage of the Burmans could have no assistance from their faith in any way, but the very contrary: it fought against them.

There is no flexibility in Buddhism. It is a law.

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304 561 562 festival for a girl of great importance, this ear-boring, and, according to the wealth of the parents, it is accompanied by pwès and other rejoicings.

A little girl, the daughter of a shopkeeper here in this town, had her ears bored the other day, and there were great rejoicings. There was a pwè open to all for three nights, and there were great quantities of food, and sweets, and many presents given away, and on the last night the river was illuminated. There was a boat anchored in mid-stream, and from this were launched myriads of tiny rafts, each with a little lamp on board. The lamps gleamed bright with golden light as they drifted on the bosom of the great water, a moving line of living fire. There were little boats, too, with the outlines marked with lamps, and there were pagodas and miniature houses all floating, floating down the river, till, in far distance by the promontory, the lamps flickered out one by one, and the river fell asleep again.

'There is only one great festival in a girl's life,' a woman told me. 'We try to make it as good as we can. Boys have many festivals, girls have but one. It is only just that it should be good.'

562 157 And so they grow up very quiet, very sedate, looking on the world about them with very clear eyes. It is strange, talking to Burmese girls, to see how much they know and understand of the world about them. It is to them no great mystery, full of unimaginable good and evil, but a world that they are learning to understand, and where good and evil are never unmixed. Men are to them neither angels nor devils, but just men, and so the world does not hold for them the disappointments, the disillusionings

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that await those who do not know. They have their dreams—who shall doubt it?—dreams of him who shall love them, whom they shall love, who shall make life one great glory to them; but their dreams are dreams that can come true. They do not frame to themselves ideals out of their own ignorance and imagine these to be good, but they keep their eyes wide open to the far more beautiful realities that are around them every day. They know that a living lover is greater, and truer, and better than any ideal of a girl's dream. They live in a real world, and they know it is good.

In time the lover comes. There is a delightful custom all through Burma, an institution, in fact, called 'courting-time.' It is from nine till ten o'clock, more especially on moonlight nights, those wonderful tropic nights, when the whole world lies in a silver dream, when the little wandering airs that touch your cheek like a caress are heavy with the scent of flowers, and your heart comes into your throat for the very beauty of life.

There is in front of every house a veranda, raised perhaps three feet from the ground, and there the girl will sit in the shadow of the eaves, sometimes with a friend, but usually alone; and her suitors will come and stand by the veranda, and talk softly in little broken sentences, as lovers do. There may be many young men come, one by one, if they mean business, with a friend if it be merely a visit of courtesy. And the girl will receive them all, and will talk to them all; will laugh with a little humorous knowledge of each man's peculiarities; and she may give them cheroots, of her own making;

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585 Friends are called to the wedding, and a ribbon is stretched round the couple, and then their hands are clasped; they also eat out of the same dish. All this is very pretty, but not at all necessary.

It is, indeed, not a settled point in law what constitutes a marriage, but there are certain things that will render it void. For instance, no marriage can be a marriage without the consent of the girl's parents if she be under age, and there are certain other conditions which must be fulfilled.

But although there be this doubt about the actual ceremony of marriage, there is none at all about the status. There is no confusion between a woman who is married and a woman who is not. The condition of marriage is well known, and it brings the parties under the laws that pertain to husband and wife. A woman not married does not, of course, obtain these privileges; there is a very strict line between the two.

585 515 157 Amongst the poorer people a marriage is frequently kept secret for several days. The great pomp and ceremony which with us, and occasionally with a few rich Burmese, consecrate a man and a woman to each other for life, are absent at the greater number of Burmese marriages; and the reason they tell me is that the girl is shy. She does not like to be stared at, and wondered at, as a maiden about to be a wife; it troubles her that the affairs of her heart, her love, her marriage, should be so public. The young men come at night and throw stones upon the house roof, and demand presents from the bridegroom. He does not mind giving the presents; but he, too, does not like the publicity. And so

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Divorce is a dissolution of that partnership. A Burman would not ask, 'Were they married?' but, 'Are they man and wife?' And so with divorce, it is a cessation of the state of marriage.

Elders tell me that women ask for divorce far more than men do. 'Men have patience, and women have not,' that is what they say. For every little quarrel a woman will want a divorce. 'Thakin, if we were to grant divorces every time a woman came and demanded it, we should be doing nothing else all day long. If a husband comes home to find dinner not cooked, and speaks angrily, his wife will rush to us in tears for a divorce. If he speaks to another woman and smiles, if he does not give his wife a new dress, if he be fond of going out in the evening, all these are reasons for a breathless demand for a divorce. The wives get cross and run to us and cry, "My husband has been angry with me. Never will I live with him again. Give me a divorce." Or, "See my clothes, how old they are. I cannot buy any new dress. I will have a divorce." And we say, "Yes, yes; it is very sad. Of course, you must have a divorce; but we cannot give you one to-night. Go away, and come again in three days or in four days, when we have more time." And they go away, thakin, and they do not return. Next day it is all forgotten. You see, they don't know what they want; they turn with the wind—they have no patience.'

Sometimes they repent too late. Here is another of my memories about divorce:

There was a man and his wife, cultivators, living in a small village. The land that he cultivated

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 API Burma
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10. YOUNG CHILDREN'S TOY

Manufactured toys are the most noticeable wares in the sale-booths. A universal toy is the seed from the giant pod of the *dè* creeper (No. 251). Like marbles with us, the seeds—*gôn-hnyin*—are the prizes of the game. In Sangermano's time (1783–1806) these games used to be played by adults. A characteristic boys' game is *sitkpyit* (No. 23). Lots are cast for riders and horses. A ball or bundle is thrown from rider to rider till a player misses the catch, when all the riders dismount and scramble with the horses for the ball. The one who secures it becomes or remains a rider as the case may be. Boys run races for their own sport and that of their elders, and race their toy boats. They fight duels with their kites, each flier seeking to saw through his opponent's kite-line, for which purpose a length of string has been roughened with sand or pounded glass. The peg-top is a favourite toy. That it is indigenous is proved by certain proverbial sayings. Burmese boys are more like our own and take to European games more kindly than other Asiatics (*cf.* p. 69). The toy of the day is the tricycle, which parents will pinch themselves to provide for their children, and which the happy possessors of will make the common property of all their playmates. Where children awaken such genuine interest, punishment is rarely called for and is never

11. GAMES IN THE WATER.